THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

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National Intelligence Officers

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MEMORANDUM FOR: Robert R. Bowie
Director, National Foreign Assessment Center

FROM   :

National Intelligence Officer for
Conventional Forces

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SUBJECT   : NFAC Responsibility for Indications and Warning

After having discussed the NFAC role in Warning with principal interested officers in NFAC, I would, in brief, make the following points:

--NFAC and the DDI have been involved in Indications and Warning in varying degrees since 1951. From 1951 to 1974 the Deputy Director of Central Intelligence or the Director of the Office of Current Intelligence (OCI) chaired the Watch Committee, which published weekly reports on the status of the world situation and those developments which posed potential imminent threat to US national security. In 1974 the Watch Committee was dissolved and the Strategic Warning Staff (SWS) created. This is a DCI staff which serves the Director's Special Assistant for Indications and Warning. (Until his transfer to EUCOM, this Special Assistant was [   ] of DIA.) There is presently no Special Assistant. The NFAC has placed three analysts on the SWS.

--The formal Indications and Warning mechanisms of the National Intelligence Community, including the SWS, have focused on the key potential threats to US security such as the threat of Soviet attack, a North Korean attack or war in the Middle East. These warning topics are considered to be Warning (with a capital "W"). The rest of the warning problem (i.e., conflict in Africa) is considered to be "warning" (little "w") and are handled through special working groups as appropriate--for example, the present work on the Horn.

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--NFAC is heavily involved in the study of the Indications
and Warning problem. NFAC has heavy representation in the DIA-
sponsored Warning Improvement Study Program (WISP) which is
currently the prime effort in the National Intelligence Community
to develop methodologies and organizational structures to handle
Indications and Warning and crisis management. NFAC is represented
on all seven of the WISP subcommittees, and chairs two of them.
Considerable time and effort has been devoted to support of the
WISP effort and NFAC has played a major role in developing the
methodologies and indications lists for WISP.

--The problem of NFAC's relationship to the NITC with regard
to Indications and Warning is a subset of the larger problem a
NFAC interface with NITC across the board. There is wide agreement
that NFAC has a principal role in developing requirements and
priorities for Indications and Warning and crisis management.
There is less certainty about the degree to which NFAC should
perform a day-to-day "watch" function. My thought is that the
Ops Center should be manned and trained to participate in that
function with other centers--but not necessarily be prime to that
function. NITC, of course, will be a critical component in the
mechanism to control national intelligence collection during
periods of crisis, but cannot play the leading role in the day-
to-day "watch" function or the development of crisis management
collection strategies.

--The DCI has made clear his intentions to rationalize the
Indications and Warning function within the National Intelligence
Community. It is not yet clear what roles the various agencies
would play. The Defense Intelligence Agency has, over the years,
resisted efforts of the DCI to interpose himself between the
military intelligence community and its principal consumer, the
JCS. There is clear agreement, however, that NFAC has a major role
in planning, overseeing and coordinating the Community Indications
and Warning and crisis management function. The major issue remains
to be the extent to which NFAC will be involved in the day-to-day
Indications and Warning "watch" function. There are varying views
within the NFAC on what should be the formal NFAC responsibility
for normal Indications and Warning "watch" operations. This, I
believe, is a question for further discussion.

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